

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Community Services



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 25, 2013

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Office of Human Relations Hosts Discussion on Human Trafficking

(Bel Air, MD) - - The Harford County Human Relations Commission held a Community Conversation on Human Trafficking on Wednesday, November 20. There was a packed house at the Veronica "Roni" Chenoweth Activity Center in Fallston.

Nationally known speaker and expert, Jeanne Allert, gave the keynote address, discussing the latest issues and concerns regarding human trafficking victim awareness. Allert told the audience that federal law defines Human Trafficking as the "recruiting, harboring, transporting, provisioning, or obtaining of a person age 18 or older for labor or services through force, fraud, or coercion to subject to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery." She explained that the buying and selling of human beings is the second fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world.

Allert noted that domestically, Atlanta, Georgia is ranked the number one destination for commercial minor sex trafficking based upon certain characteristics. Baltimore has very similar characteristics making it equally appealing. Harford County is poised on the I-95 corridor in close proximity to an international airport, with high commuter patterns, large ethnic concentrations, significant drug trade, large sports/entertainment venues, and most importantly weak laws against this crime. Allert urged people to be vigilant, to encourage strengthening of local laws and to request training for all law enforcement and other public servants.

Allert says the target recruitment population in the U.S. is 11 to 13 year-olds, runaways, throw-aways, foster children and children estranged from a protective social environment. "But not always," she cautioned, and cited an example of trafficking located in a wealthy suburb of the nation's capital where teenage girls were being sold for fun and profit. The solution, Ms. Allert contends, is to increase awareness of this issue, to assist in reducing victimization by investing time and money to victim assistance programs and to advocate for change.

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Page Two

Harford Cable Network taped the event. It will air on HCN. You can also find it on the Harford County Department of Community Services' website (www.harfordcountymd.gov/services).

The Human Relations Commission is a 15 member board whose members are appointed by the County Executive and approved by the County Council of terms coterminous with the County Executive's. Please visit the web site at www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/humanrelations or contact the Office of Human Relations at 410-638-4739.

The Office of Human Relations is within the Harford County Department of Community Services.

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"Preserving Harford's past. Promoting Harford's future."